



## **Office of the Inspector General**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Inspector General launches medical inspection program to improve health care at California's prisons**

SACRAMENTO—The Office of the Inspector General has started a new medical inspection program to evaluate and monitor the progress of medical care delivery to California's prison inmates. The program, which uses a weighting system to evaluate key areas of medical care, was created at the request of the federal receiver who oversees medical care delivery in the state's prisons. The goal of the program is to identify areas for improvement so the prisons can ultimately meet constitutional standards of medical care.

Problems in the quality of prison medical care resulted in a class action lawsuit now known as *Plata v. Schwarzenegger*. The lawsuit alleged that health care was so inadequate that California effectively violated inmates' Eighth Amendment rights, which prohibit cruel and unusual punishment. As a result, the federal court established a receivership to manage the state's prison medical system.

"The inspection program provides an opportunity for the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to take a hard look at its medical care services," said Inspector General David Shaw. "My office is committed to helping each prison achieve a constitutionally adequate level of inmate care. The information provided from our medical inspection program will assist the receiver in implementing a stable, constitutionally adequate health care system for California's inmates and help the state avoid future litigation."

The program's first public report, released today, presents the inspection results for California State Prison, Sacramento. California State Prison, Sacramento, received 65.2 percent of the total 869 weighted points possible. The inspection report provides the prison's weighted score for each of the 20 medical delivery components, as well as definitions of the components,

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background information, and a detailed results table. The weighting process assigns more points to areas that pose greater risk to inmate health, such as chronic care and clinical services.

Some of the highest scoring areas at California State Prison, Sacramento, were the prison's medical staffing levels and training, general clinic operations, and the handling of inmates exposed to pepper spray who are prescribed medication.

The lowest scoring areas were the prison's monitoring of inmate hunger strikes, cancer screenings and influenza immunizations, and effectiveness in filing, storing, and retrieving medical records.

In developing the inspection program, the Office of the Inspector General consulted with clinical experts, the receiver's office, plaintiffs' counsel, and other stakeholders to establish protocols designed to gauge the effectiveness of medical care delivery.

The Inspector General's office plans to inspect each state prison once a year. Consistent with the Inspector General's agreement with the receiver and the plaintiffs' counsel, the medical inspections will focus on the medical care components identified in the *Plata* lawsuit. However, the Office of the Inspector General does not evaluate whether a specific percentage score meets constitutional standards, which is a legal matter for the federal court to determine.

The entire inspection report may be viewed and downloaded from the Office of the Inspector General's Web site at <http://www.oig.ca.gov/>.

The Office of the Inspector General is an independent state agency responsible for oversight of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. The office carries out its mission by conducting audits, special reviews, and investigations of the department to uncover criminal conduct, administrative wrongdoing, poor management practices, waste, fraud, and other abuses by staff, supervisors, and management.

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